Catholic Traditions and History

Use this key to check answers and read the explanations.

1. Which three sacraments does the Catholic catechism group under Christian initiation?

A. Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist
B. Baptism, Matrimony, and Holy Orders
C. Confirmation, Penance, and Matrimony
D. Eucharist, Holy Orders, and Anointing of the Sick

Correct answer: A. Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist

The catechism groups Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist as Christian initiation. The other options combine sacraments from different groups.

2. On a typical Sunday in Ordinary Time, which color does the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops associate with the day's main Roman Rite celebration?

A. Violet
B. Red
C. Green
D. Rose

Correct answer: C. Green

The U.S. Roman Rite calendar uses green for Ordinary Time. A particular celebration can have its own designation.

3. Which book contains the readings and responsorial psalm assigned to a particular Roman Catholic Mass?

A. A book of parish announcements
B. The Lectionary
C. The diocesan directory
D. A list of saints' feast dates

Correct answer: B. The Lectionary

The Lectionary arranges scripture selections and responsorial psalms by occasion. A parish can find the appointed readings for a given Mass there.

4. What is another name for the Liturgy of the Hours, the Catholic cycle of prayers marking the day?

A. The Lectionary
B. The Roman Martyrology
C. The General Roman Calendar
D. The Divine Office

Correct answer: D. The Divine Office
The Divine Office is another name for the Liturgy of the Hours. The prayers draw on scripture and mark different times of day.

5. Which broad subject does Pope Francis address in his 2015 encyclical Laudato si'?

A. The history of the Roman calendar
B. Care for the earth as a shared home
C. Rules for translating the Lectionary
D. The design of church buildings in Rome

Correct answer: B. Care for the earth as a shared home
Laudato si' addresses environmental problems and how they connect with human communities. Its title draws on a canticle by Francis of Assisi.

6. Which group lists the three degrees of Holy Orders given in the Catholic catechism?

A. Bishop, priest, and deacon
B. Bishop, religious sister, and priest
C. Priest, cantor, and lector
D. Bishop, catechist, and lector

Correct answer: A. Bishop, priest, and deacon
The three degrees are episcopate, presbyterate, and diaconate, the ministries of bishops, priests, and deacons.

7. The 1965 Vatican decree closing the Second Vatican Council says it opened on October 11, 1962. Which pope had called it?

A. John Paul II
B. Paul VI
C. Pius XI
D. John XXIII

Correct answer: D. John XXIII
Paul VI issued the closing decree. In it, he names his predecessor John XXIII as the pope who called the council.

8. How does paragraph 1203 of the Catholic catechism identify the Ambrosian rite?

A. An alternate name for the Alexandrian rite
B. An alternate name for the Maronite rite
C. A local rite in the Latin tradition
D. A newer name for the Byzantine rite

Correct answer: C. A local rite in the Latin tradition
The catechism includes the Ambrosian rite among local forms of the Latin tradition. It lists the other named traditions separately.

9. In the Sunday Lectionary summary used by the U.S. bishops, which Gospel supplies most of the readings in Year C?

A. Luke
B. Matthew
C. Mark
D. John

Correct answer: A. Luke
Year C emphasizes Luke. Matthew is central in Year A, Mark in Year B, and John is read at various times in the cycle.

10. Which pair can a reader look up for a specific date in the annual liturgical calendar for U.S. dioceses?

A. The opening times of individual churches and their seating plans
B. The names of local readers and their arrival times
C. The cost of altar flowers and the shop that supplied them
D. The liturgical color and the reference for the Mass readings

Correct answer: D. The liturgical color and the reference for the Mass readings
The calendar lists a day's celebration, rank, color, and readings. It also records the Psalter cycle used for the Liturgy of the Hours.

11. A fictional schedule keeps the current Sunday Lectionary cycle until January 1, even though Advent began weeks earlier. On which day should the schedule switch cycles?

A. Christmas Day
B. The first Sunday of January
C. The first Sunday of Advent
D. The first Sunday of Lent

Correct answer: C. The first Sunday of Advent
The year begins on the first Sunday of Advent in the U.S. Lectionary summary. The schedule changes there even when the civil year carries on.

12. Which pair fits the standard U.S. bishops' summary of Gospel canticles for Morning and Evening Prayer?

A. Mary's canticle for Morning Prayer and Zechariah's for Evening Prayer
B. Zechariah's canticle for Morning Prayer and Mary's for Evening Prayer
C. Zechariah's canticle for both Morning and Evening Prayer
D. Mary's canticle for both Morning and Evening Prayer

Correct answer: B. Zechariah's canticle for Morning Prayer and Mary's for Evening Prayer
The Benedictus, the Canticle of Zechariah, is used in the morning. The Magnificat, the Canticle of Mary, is used in the evening.

13. Which summary matches the balance in article 36 of the Second Vatican Council's constitution on the liturgy?

A. It requires all Eastern Catholic rites to adopt Latin.
B. It requires every part of every celebration to use a local language.
C. It restricts local languages to announcements outside the service.
D. It preserves Latin in the Latin rites and allows broader use of local languages under the stated rules.

Correct answer: D. It preserves Latin in the Latin rites and allows broader use of local languages under the stated rules.
Article 36 calls for retaining Latin in the Latin rites and describes how local languages may be used more widely, including for readings.

14. You want to locate a chapter titled The People of God in an official Vatican II constitution. Which document contains it?

A. Lumen gentium
B. Sacrosanctum Concilium
C. Laudato si'
D. In Spiritu Sancto

Correct answer: A. Lumen gentium
The People of God is chapter two of Lumen gentium, the council's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church.

15. An archive labels the Second Vatican Council's opening as October 1962 and its formal closing as December 1965. How much longer than three full years did the council run by those labels?

A. About ten months
B. About six months
C. About two months
D. About one year

Correct answer: C. About two months
The formal closing on December 8, 1965 falls roughly two months after the third anniversary of the October 11, 1962 opening.